



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
**ADAM J. BELLO**  
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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## COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES VETERANS SERVICE AGENCY OBTAINED \$9 MILLION IN ONE-TIME LUMP SUM DISABILITY PAYMENTS TO LOCAL VETERANS

*Commitment to increased staffing at VSA has doubled the amount of money recovered yearly for veterans*

**ROCHESTER, NY** — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announced that the Veterans Service Agency (VSA) helped obtain \$9 million in retroactive disability claims for local veterans over the past 12 months. These veterans had their claims denied by the Veterans Administration, but the VSA went to court to fight these cases and won.

This represents a 110 percent increase in the amount recovered compared to the final year of the previous administration. Under Executive Director Nick Stefanovic, in the last four years, Monroe County VSA has obtained more than \$27 million in these one-time, tax-free retroactive benefit payments for our local veterans.

“When I took office in January 2020, I learned that the VSA was struggling to keep up with the needs of local veterans. For too long, previous administrations had been cutting staff at the VSA and reducing services for our veterans,” **said County Executive Bello**. “One of my first steps was to approve the hiring of another Veterans Service Officer. That investment yielded an increased return of roughly \$1.2 million in additional money for local veterans during that first year. Last year we added another staff member, and the result is that this year we’ve doubled the amount of money we are able to get for veterans than when we took office.”

From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 the VSA assisted local veterans in receiving \$9 million in retroactive benefits payments. The investment in VSA staffing has yielded a steady return for our veterans. The total annual amount VSA helped veterans receive in contested disability claims was:

Year	Amount
July 2018-June 2019	\$4,294,011
July 2019-June 2020	\$5,503,782
July 2020-June 2021	\$6,311,750
July 2021-June 2022	\$6,272,906
July 2022-June 2023	\$9,000,000

Under Director Stefanovic, in the last four years, our VSA has recovered more than \$27 million in these one-time, tax-free retroactive benefit payments for local veterans.

The Bello administration has increased the staffing levels at the Monroe County VSA by 25 percent, and that number will increase next year when the new nature-based therapy program is launched.

Not only does the Monroe County VSA recover millions in these lump sum retroactive payments every year, they help veterans get access to monthly benefits, like VA disability compensation, veterans pensions, and survivor benefits for veterans family members. The VSA also connects veterans to life saving physical and mental health services and helps them find housing.

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